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ABSTRACT

A study explored the attitudes of marketing education cooperative training students at 10 Houston area high schools to determine their perceptions of the program and their reasons for enrolling. A three-page instrument was developed, tested in a pilot study and then revised and distributed to the 10 schools. Data were collected from 82 male and 82 female students. Findings indicated the majority of students agreed with all positive statements related to career and job skills. Little difference was found between male and female responses and between students whose families owned their own businesses and those whose families did not. Students indicated they were interested in marketing education because of future opportunities available to those who possess the skills taught through the marketing education program. It was recommended that: (1) research be conducted to determine what students know about marketing education programs before they enroll; (2) coordinators develop an intensive program for recruitment; (3) Distributive Education Clubs of America officers and members become actively involved in the future of their chapter; and (4) a positive image and attitude be created in the community. (Numerous tables and charts are included in the paper and in the appendix; there are 12 references.) (YLB)

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ED305507

STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD MARKETING EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN THE HOUSTON, TEXAS AREA

A Research Project

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Course

OCED 6304: Research in Occupational Education

Presented to:

Dr. Kenneth W. Brown

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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Robert J. McAndrews

Fall 1988

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ABSTRACT

McAndrews, Robert J. Student Attitudes Toward Marketing Education Programs in the Houston, Texas Area. Research Project. University of Houston, December, 1988.

What can be done to attract more students to enroll in Marketing Education at the high school level? A growing concern among all vocational educators is the numbers of students enrolling in our programs. With a limited schedule and many requirements, students must carefully select each course. It is the responsibility of the teacher-coordinator to promote the marketing education program. The first step in developing a plan is to study our market, the students.

Purpose and Statement of Problem: Determine student attitudes toward marketing education at their school and study reasons that influenced their decisions to enroll.

Procedure and Analysis: Data was collected via surveys. The following inquiries were made: (1) Are students interested in studying marketing because of a family business or to obtain the skills needed to open their own business one day; (2) Is there a difference in the reasons why males and females enroll in marketing education; (3) Are students interested in taking marketing education for exposure to a variety of marketing careers and a more positive selection of a vocation?

Findings: The majority of students agreed with all positive statements related to career and job skills. There was very little difference between male and females responses and those from students whose families did and did not own their own business. Students indicated that they were interested in marketing education because of future aopportunities available to those who posess the skills taught through the ME program.

Teacher-coordinators may need to determine exactly what the students know about the program requirements and offerings prior to their enrollment in order to promote their programs effectively.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rapid growth experienced in the Houston area during the seventies and eighties also brought thousands of new retailing, wholesaling and service selling businesses. According to the Texas Education Agency, more than one third of all occupations are related to the field of marketing. As the economy becomes more and more service oriented, even more employees will be needed to perform the marketing functions associated with buying, selling, promoting and distributing goods and services. The outlook until the turn of the century is for many segments of marketing to have increased employment opportunities particularly in business and personal services and entrepreneurship.

Across the country marketing education programs face low student enrollments in relation to labor market demand in marketing. Student enrollments in high school marketing programs are not matching the projected need for trained workers in marketing (Clodfelter, Fall, 1985).

What can be done to attract more students who need and can benefit from such courses? Similar studies conducted in various parts of the country were conducted to examine

student attitudes about marketing courses in their high schools. With such information, marketing education teacher-coordinators can examine their programs and develop better strategies for promoting marketing education at their schools (Clodfelter, Fall, 1985).

This research project will evaluate secondary marketing education programs in Houston and surrounding areas by determining students' attitudes and reasons for enrolling in secondary marketing education programs.

Statement of the Problem

In order to determine the students' attitudes of the marketing program, the following problem will be addressed in this study: What are the major perceptions of high school students toward the marketing education program and what are their reasons for enrolling?

In order to answer this question, the following subproblems must be addressed:

Subproblem 1

Are students interested in studying marketing because of a family business or to obtain the skills needed to open their own businesses one day? Many students come from families who own and run their own businesses. It will be interesting to see if there is any difference in the opinions of students whose family do own a business and those whose families do not.

Subproblem 2

Is there a difference in the reasons why males and females enroll in marketing education? This information may prove to be useful in recruitment of students.

Subproblem 3

Are students interested in taking marketing education for exposure to a variety of marketing careers and a more positive selection of a vocation?

Scope

This study will explore the attitudes of marketing education cooperative training students at ten Houston area high schools to determine their perception of the program and their reasons for enrolling in the program. The teacher-coordinators at the following high schools agreed to participate in this study.

Alvin High School
Barbara Jordan High School for Careers
Cypress-Fairbanks High School
Jersey Village High School
Kingwood High School
Klein Forest High School
Klein Oak High School
Magnolia High School
Spring High School
Tomball High School

Limitations and Delimitations

This study will be delimited to include students who are currently enrolled in a first year marketing education cooperative training program in a Houston (or suburb) high school. These students come to school and attend a marketing education class for one hour each day. They attend three other courses at school and are released early so that they may hold a part-time training job with a cooperating business in the community. Students must be employed a minimum of 15 hours during the school week in order to receive credit in this program. Students from various income areas have been researched in order to obtain a varied demographic mix.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions show the intended meaning of certain terms as they will be used in this study:

Cooperative Training Program (Co-op): the phase of the marketing education program where students (usually juniors and seniors) receive instruction in the classroom and on-the-job in an actual business setting. Students are paid wages commensurate with wages paid to other entry-level employees in similar occupations in the community.

Coordinator (Teacher-coordinator): the instructor for the marketing education program, coordinator of students on-the-job training experience and the DECA chapter advisor.

DE (Distributive Education): the former name of the marketing education program before its name changed to Marketing & Distributive Education in the early 1980's and again in 1986 to its current name of Marketing Education (See ME).

DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America): the only student organization operating through the nation's schools to attract individuals to careers in marketing, distribution, merchandising and management. A co-curricular organization structured to serve as an integral part of the classroom instructional program. This youth leadership organization operates at the local, state and national level. DECA's success and importance to the student, school, community and to the nation is based upon two main objectives: (1) to further education in marketing, distribution, merchandising and management, which will contribute to occupational competence; and (2) to promote by every means possible understanding and appreciation for the responsibilities of citizenship in our free competitive enterprise system.

ME (Marketing Education): a federally funded, state directed program which is designed to prepare Texas high school students secure entry-level, mid-management, and entrepreneurial positions in marketing, in keeping with their individual goals.

Metro-DET: The name given to a group of marketing education teacher-coordinators who meet monthly in order to discuss programs, plan mini competitive events programs, coordinate DECA scholarship activities, etc. The term stands for Metro DE Teachers.

OJT (On-the-job training): students work (training) experience while a student of the ME program.

Training sponsor: person in charge of the immediate supervision of the ME student at the place of employment.

Training station: place of business which employs and trains ME students.

Review of Related Literature

A review of the literature was undertaken to examine research previously conducted related to course selection by high school students in vocational and marketing education. According to a study by Taylor and Hawkins (1978), student course selections are determined by their interest in and usefulness of the subject. Other reasons found to be present in students choices of course offerings include student's previous success in the subject area, the perceived degree of difficulty of the subject, teacher characteristics and peer group influence.

Similar reasons were found by Veres (1981) whose study of 35 schools in New York state found that vocational education students chose vocational education based upon the following reasons: course leads to earning good money, course leads to job opportunities, having friends in the course, parents' approval, and guidance counselor's approval.

According to Foster (1983), different populations have different perceptions depending upon their values and their experiences with the organization, institution, or program. The perceptions will differ depending upon the individual or group. In order to improve a program's image, strategies must be developed that impact upon the experiences that different individuals or groups have with the program.

Marketing education professionals, as well as vocational educators in all service areas, have been concerned with the image of vocational education programs for many years. Little research has been done in the area of student attitudes towards marketing education programs especially in the Houston, Texas metropolitan area. Price (1984), in another study, claims that it has been stated by many people that marketing and distributive education is one of the best kept secrets in current times. In a country where the economy flourishes on competition and the free enterprise spirit, ME should be considered a major force in the development of the economic system. The place of

marketing education in the American economic system or educational system is not clearly understood. As pointed out by Samson (1980) there is no established, persistent image or identity for marketing education programs. Yet, there is a lack of understanding on the part of business of the purposes, goals, and benefits generated by marketing programs. This lack of understanding also filters down to the students. Many students are unaware that marketing education is even offered at their school and, as a result, there exists a large population who has never even considered the possibility of ME. The general student population is fairly easy to recruit from if you follow a certain rule of thumb. Most students would prefer to hear about a class from a fellow student rather than from a teacher. If students are made aware of the opportunities available to them through marketing education and DECA from other students, chances are that their perception of ME will change drastically.

If marketing educators are to improve students attitudes about ME, we must be sure to communicate the program objectives and create a greater awareness in our recruiting efforts. It important to have advanced marketing students and/or DECA officers assist the coordinator in the recruitment process. Oftentimes the students will go to the coordinator and tell him/her that many of their friends are "signing up for marketing." Marketing Educators also must

respond to changing employment opportunities, client groups, technology and a changing economy involved in entrepreneurship and economic development.

Procedures

This study will attempt to determine the attitude toward ME of high school students enrolled in co-op programs in the Houston area. This section will outline the procedures to be used in this study.

The population of the study will be 10 marketing education programs in the Houston area which meet the requirements for inclusion in this study. The requirements for inclusion will be:

1. Students surveyed must hold a minimum 15 hour per week job in a marketing related business.
2. A local chapter of DECA must be a part of the program at the students school.
3. Students surveyed must be enrolled in a marketing education cooperative training program at one of the following high schools in the Houston area.

ALVIN ISD
    Alvin High School
CYPRESS-FAIRBANKS ISD
    Cypress-Fairbanks High School
    Jersey Village High School
HOUSTON ISD
    Barbara Jordan HS for Careers
HUMBLE ISD
    Kingwood High School
KLEIN ISD
    Klein Forest High School
    Klein Oak High School

MAGNOLIA ISD
Magnolia High School
SPRING ISD
Spring High School
TOMBALL ISD
Tomball High School

The teacher-coordinators from each of the schools listed were contacted at a regional meeting of marketing educators. Each agreed to participate in the study.

A three page attitudinal instrument was developed. The first page included a three paragraph description of the marketing program. The second page (printed on front and back) included questions about student demographic information. The reverse side contained a response form which students used to respond to statements about the marketing education program. Finally, attached to the first two pages are the 40 statements to which the students were asked to respond.

To test the instrument, a pilot study was conducted on Friday, October 31, 1988, using the first year marketing education students at Humble High School. The students completed the questionnaire and when they were all done, discussion was held to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the instrument. Many of the students comments and criticisms were useful in revising the instrument before distributing it to the participating schools (See appendix).

On Thursday, November 3, the questionnaires were distributed to the marketing educators at a DECA regional competitive events program held at Klein Forest High School. The teachers were asked to administer the questionnaires in their first year co-op classes and return them to me at our monthly Metro-DET meeting on November 9 (See appendix).

Not all of the questionnaires were returned by November 9, however, it was felt that the information obtained from the ten schools listed would provide more than sufficient data for this study.

Data was ultimately collected from exactly eighty-two (82) boys and eighty-two (82) girls. Nineteen of the males and twenty one of the females came from families who owned their own businesses.

The surveys were divided into small stacks and divided among the marketing students at Humble High School during class one day. Since students of marketing study research, it was felt that this would be a good opportunity for students to tally the results of the study and have the opportunity to see if any trends or patterns were developing. The responses were checked off by question number on a tally sheet (refer to appendix) and the results can be seen on four Tables A-B-C-D (refer to appendix).

Chapter II

FINDINGS

In analyzing the data, it was found that the following answers must be given to the subproblem questions:

Subproblem 1

Are students interested in studying marketing because of a family business or to obtain the skills needed to open their own businesses? It was found that there was no significant difference in the responses given by those who came from families who owned businesses and those who did not (See appendix Tables 3 and 4.) However, according to the responses given for statement #1 which reads, "I feel that ME will help me to learn how to open my own business one day," 78% of the males and 79% of the females responded with either agree or strongly agree. This would indicate that a significant number of students have entrepreneurial aspirations.

Subproblem 2

Is there a difference in the reasons why males and females enroll in marketing education? The study indicates that student attitudes toward ME programs differ little between the sexes. Some of the responses

showed differences in opinions between males and females. These will be discussed as we analyze the statement categories later in this chapter.

Subproblem 3

Are students interested in taking marketing education for exposure to a variety of marketing careers and a more positive selection of a vocation? Of all six career oriented statements analyzed, well over 50% of all males and females indicated that ME would help them to obtain a better job or the information needed to take advantage of the many opportunities available to them.

The survey statements were further broken down into categories to determine student attitudes in a variety of areas which may influence student selection of the ME program. The categories are as follows:

Career Oriented Statements

Program Reputation Statements

Early Release? Easy Credit?

Money Related Statements

Statements Regarding ME & Friends

Student Awareness of ME Programs

Spoke to Counselors About ME and Not Going to College?

Career Oriented Statements

Items #1,3,4,21,24 and 40 all made a career related statement. Students overwhelmingly responded to each of these items in a very positive manner. They believed that the program would help them develop the skills necessary to secure desired employment. They strongly agreed (83% and 91%) that ME could help them to gain a better understanding of some of the possible marketing job opportunities which await them. Students also agreed (over 80%) that the skills obtained through the marketing program can always be used regardless of a persons occupation later in life.

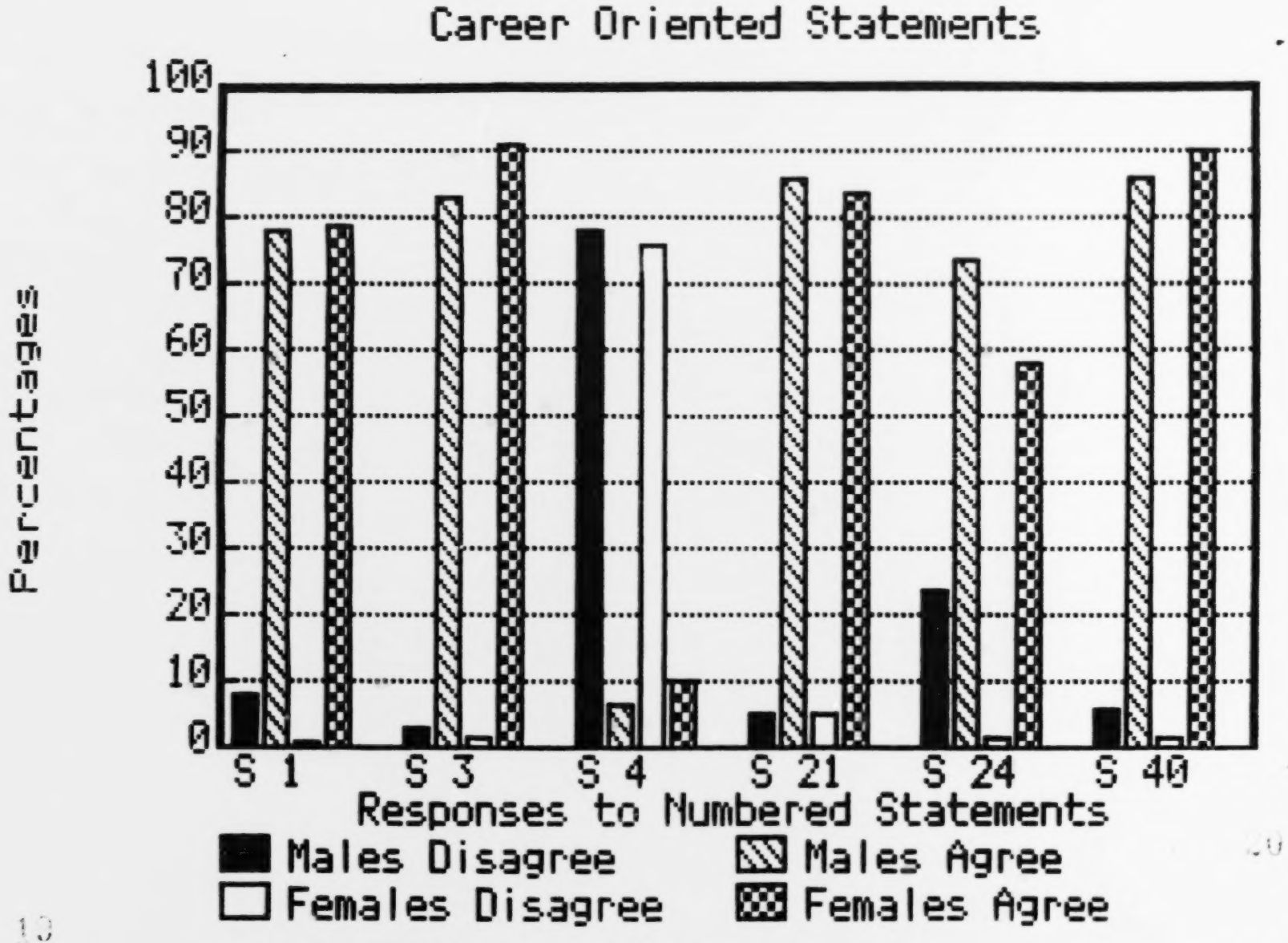
Program Reputation Statements

The responses in this category were not as positive as in the previous category. When asked if DECA was well known at their schools, students agreed approximately 50% of the time. The responses were a little higher when students were asked if DECA had a good reputation at the school (60%-70%). When students were asked if they heard about ME through publicity around the school, however, only 52% agreed, 40% disagreed and the rest were undecided.

Counselors

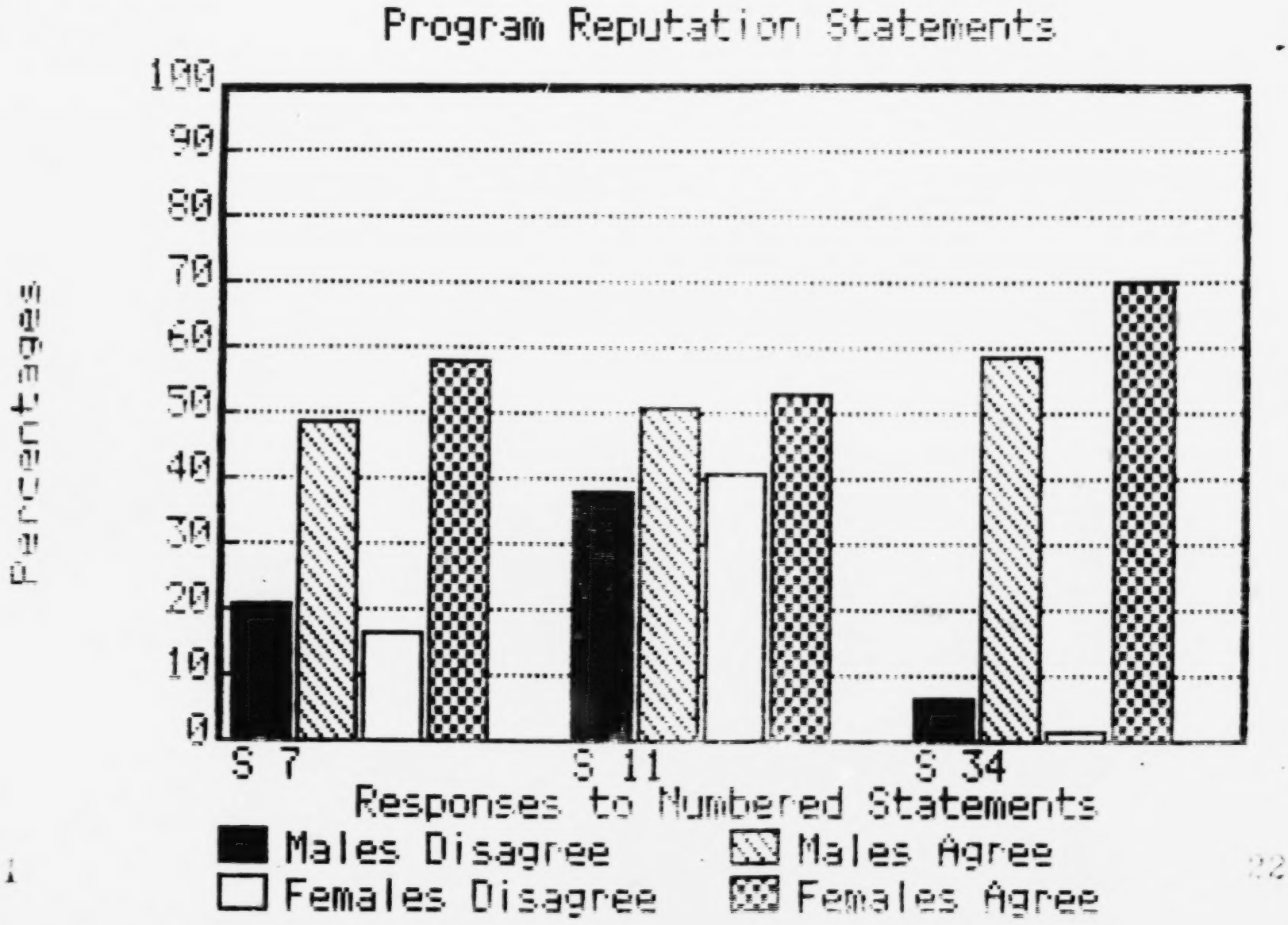
Item 19 states, "The counselors at my school talked to me about ME." Only 53% responded that they agreed with that statement while 30%-40% disagreed.

1. I feel that ME will help me to learn how to open my own business one day.
3. I believe that ME can give me a better feeling about some marketing job opportunities.
4. I am not interested in knowing about a variety of marketing careers.
21. People with marketing skills can go for in life.

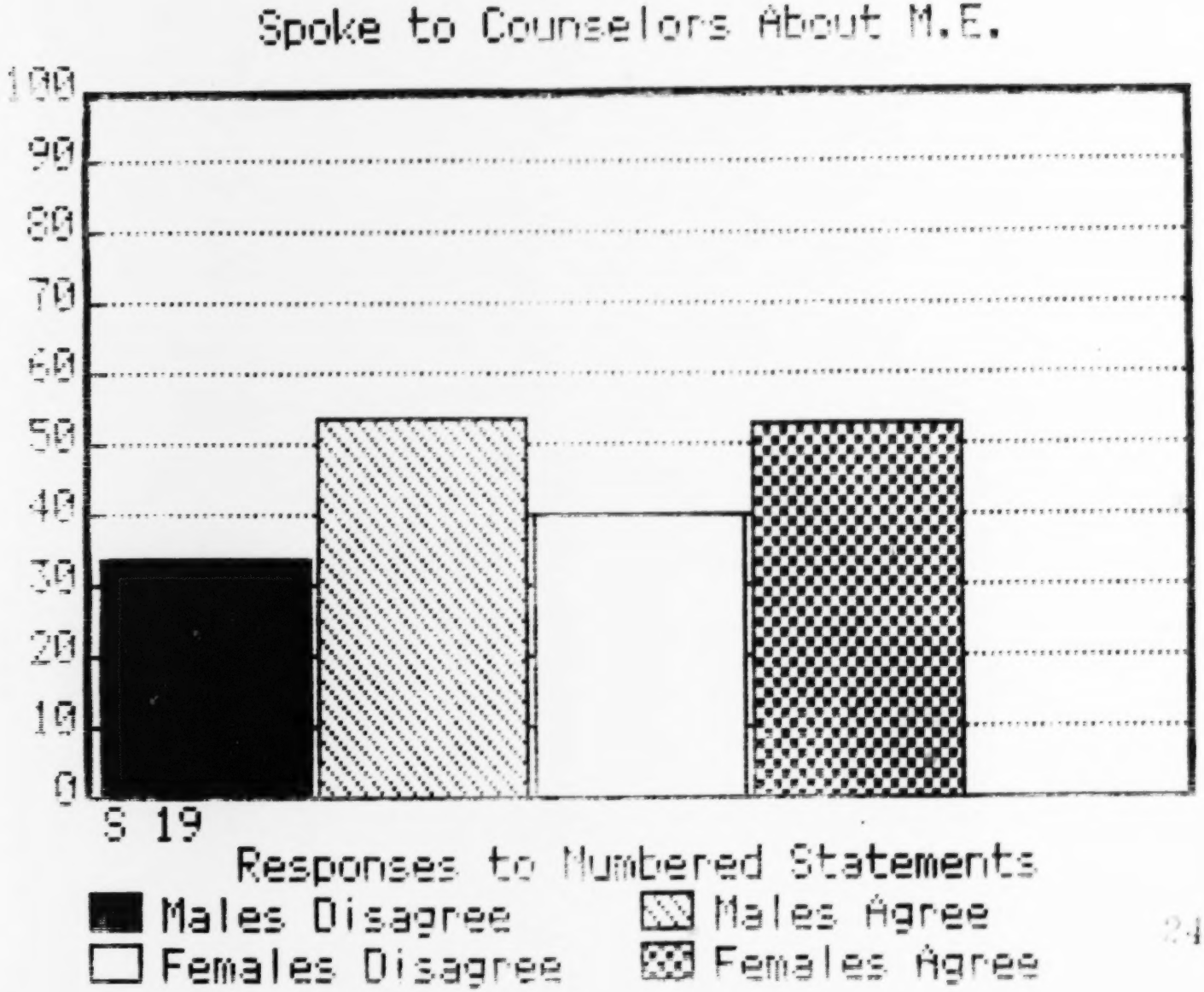


24. I feel that ME will help me to find a better job one day.
40. Marketing skills can always be used no matter what a person does for a living.

7. DECA is well known at my school.
11. I heard about ME through publicity around school.
34. ME has a good reputation at my school.



19. The counselors at my school talked to me about ME.



Friends & ME

Items 13 and 37 addressed friends and ME. The study shows that students had friends who recommended the program in over 50% of the cases. 85%-90% of the students polled indicated that they would recommend ME to their friends as a good learning experience.

College?

To the statement, "ME is only for students who do not go on to college," males disagreed 72% of the time while 91% of the females polled disagreed.

Program Awareness

Students agreed that ME would offer them the opportunity to become more responsible and dependable people. While 60%-70% indicated that they had a good idea of what subject areas were covered in the program, only 40% show that they understood what the program was all about. 40% indicated that they did not understand what the program was all about and the remainder responded that they were undecided.

Money

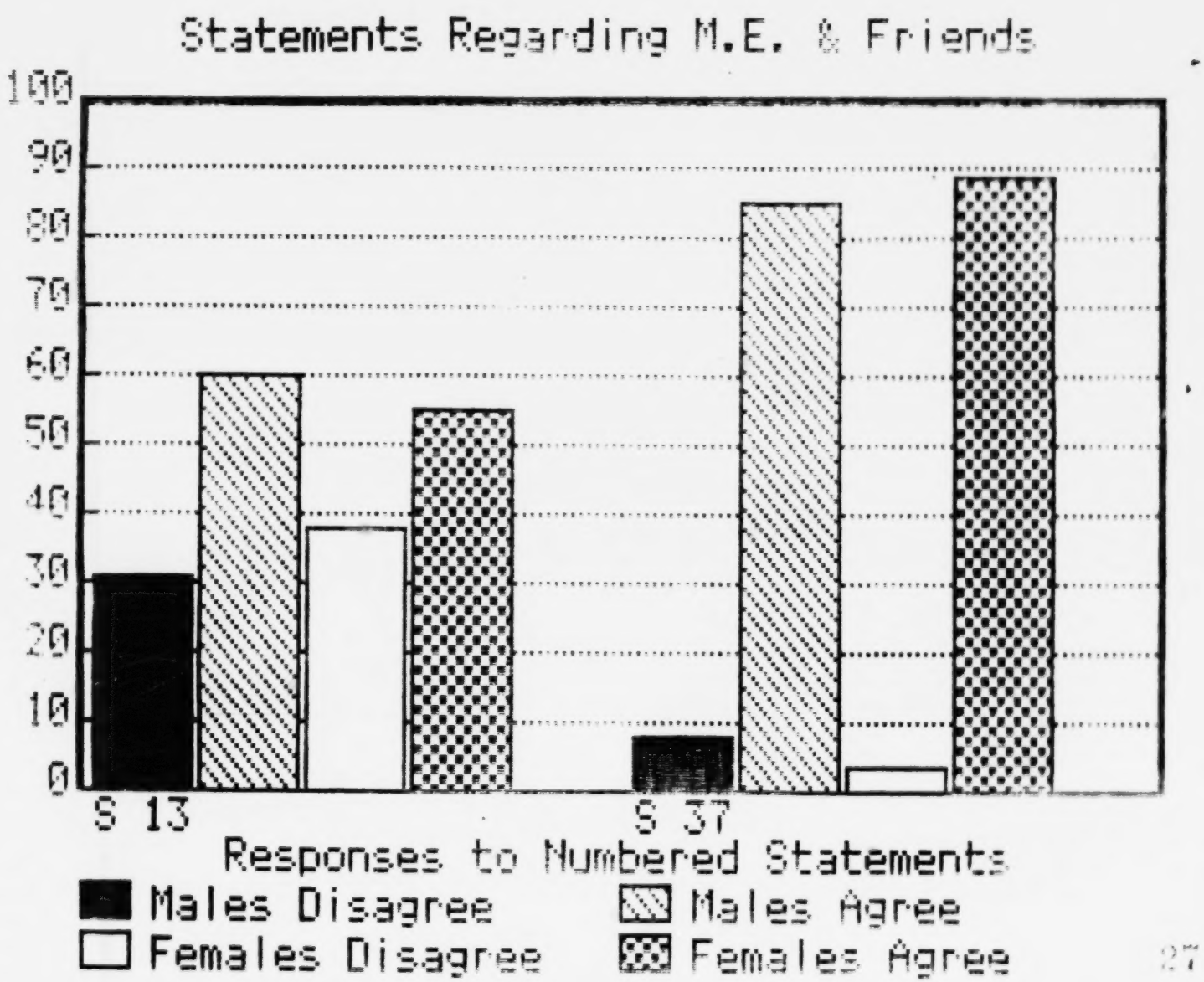
Of those who participated in this study, over 70% felt that ME had something to offer even students whose parents were financially "well-off." 60% or more of the respondents agreed that their ME job helps them to support their automobile. Equal numbers of males indicated that they enrolled in ME to earn money as did those who did not.

don't begin with sentence with reversed

13. I had friends who took ME and recommended it to me.

37. I would recommend ME to my friends as a good learning experience.

19



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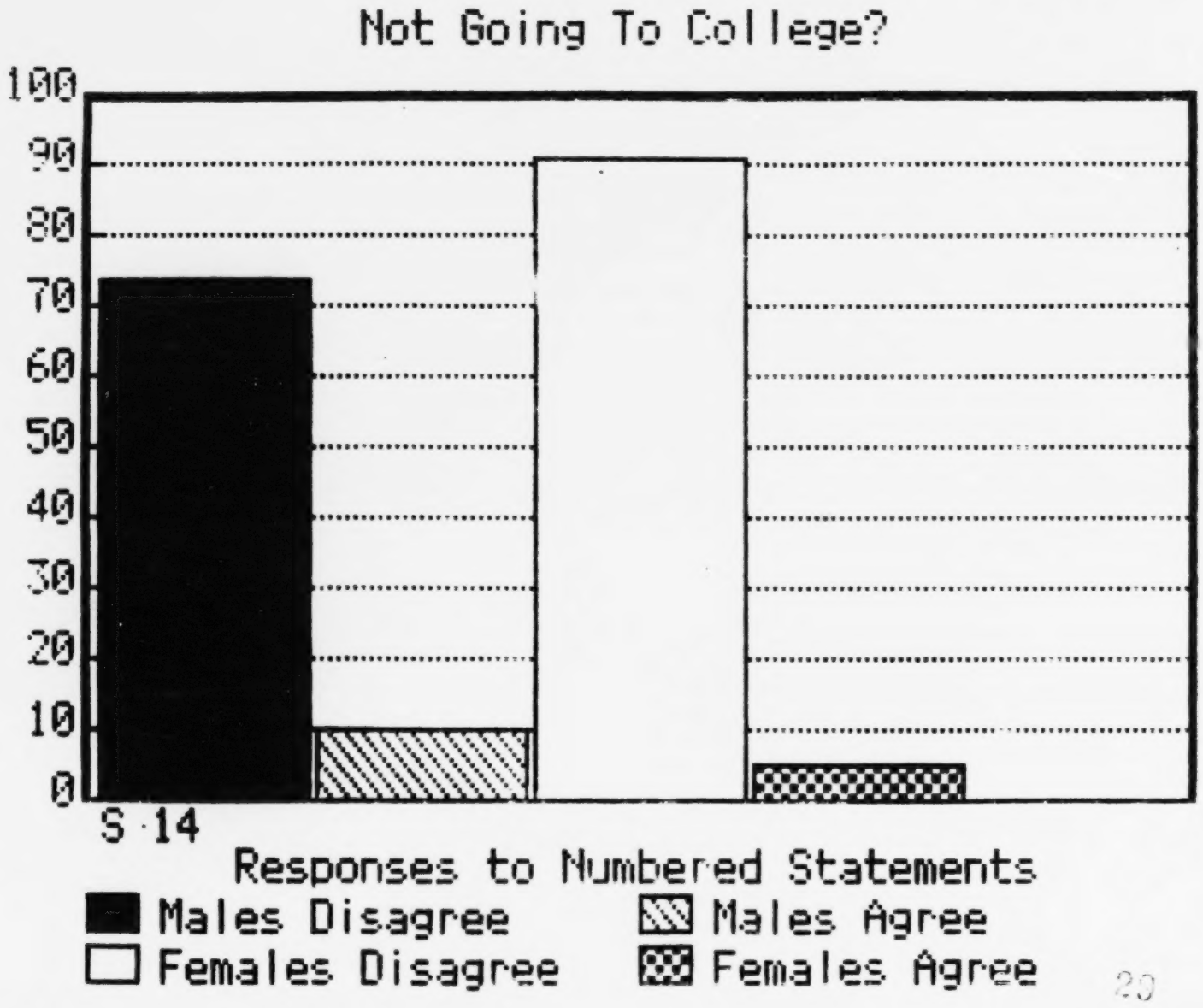
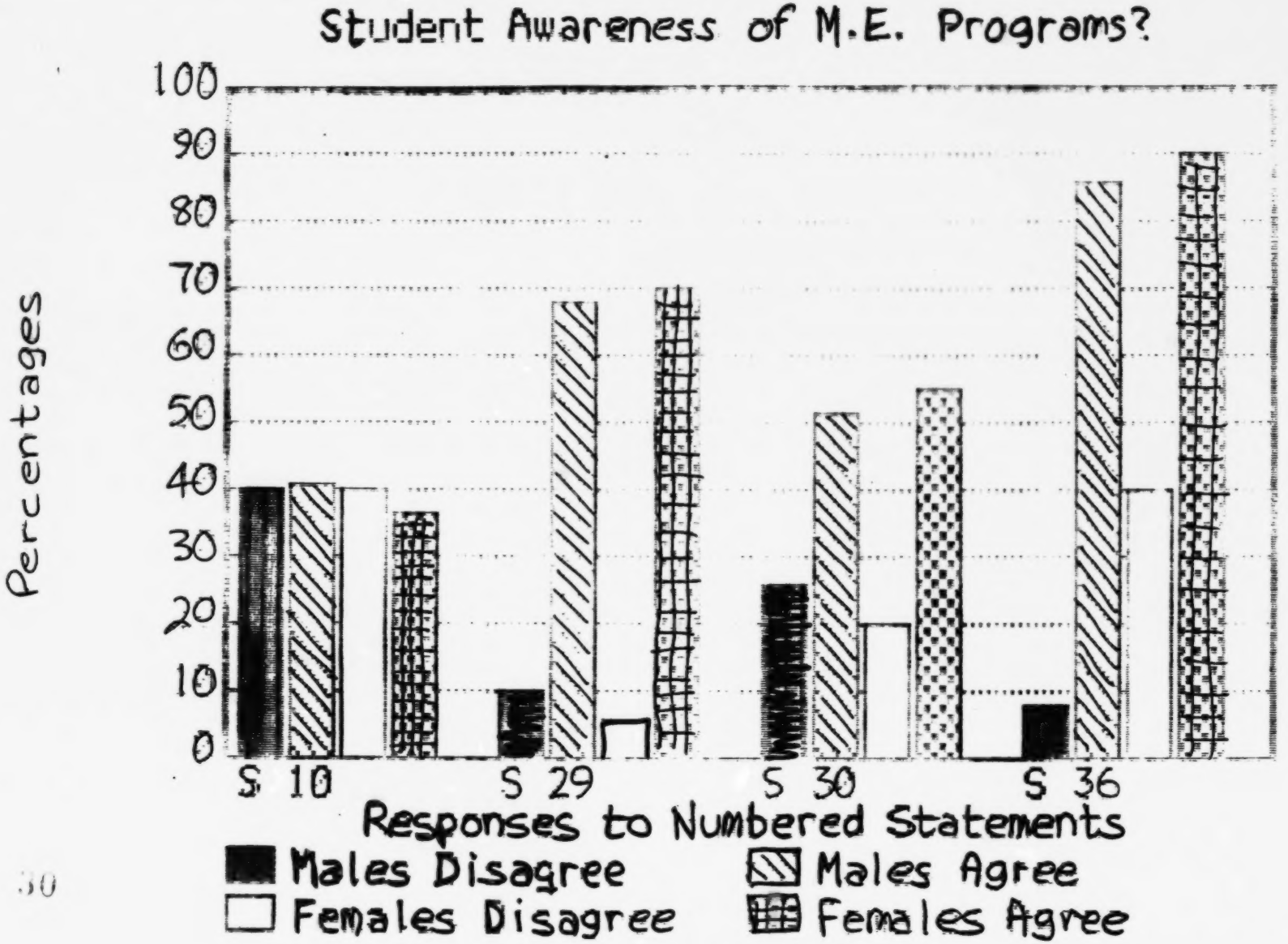
27

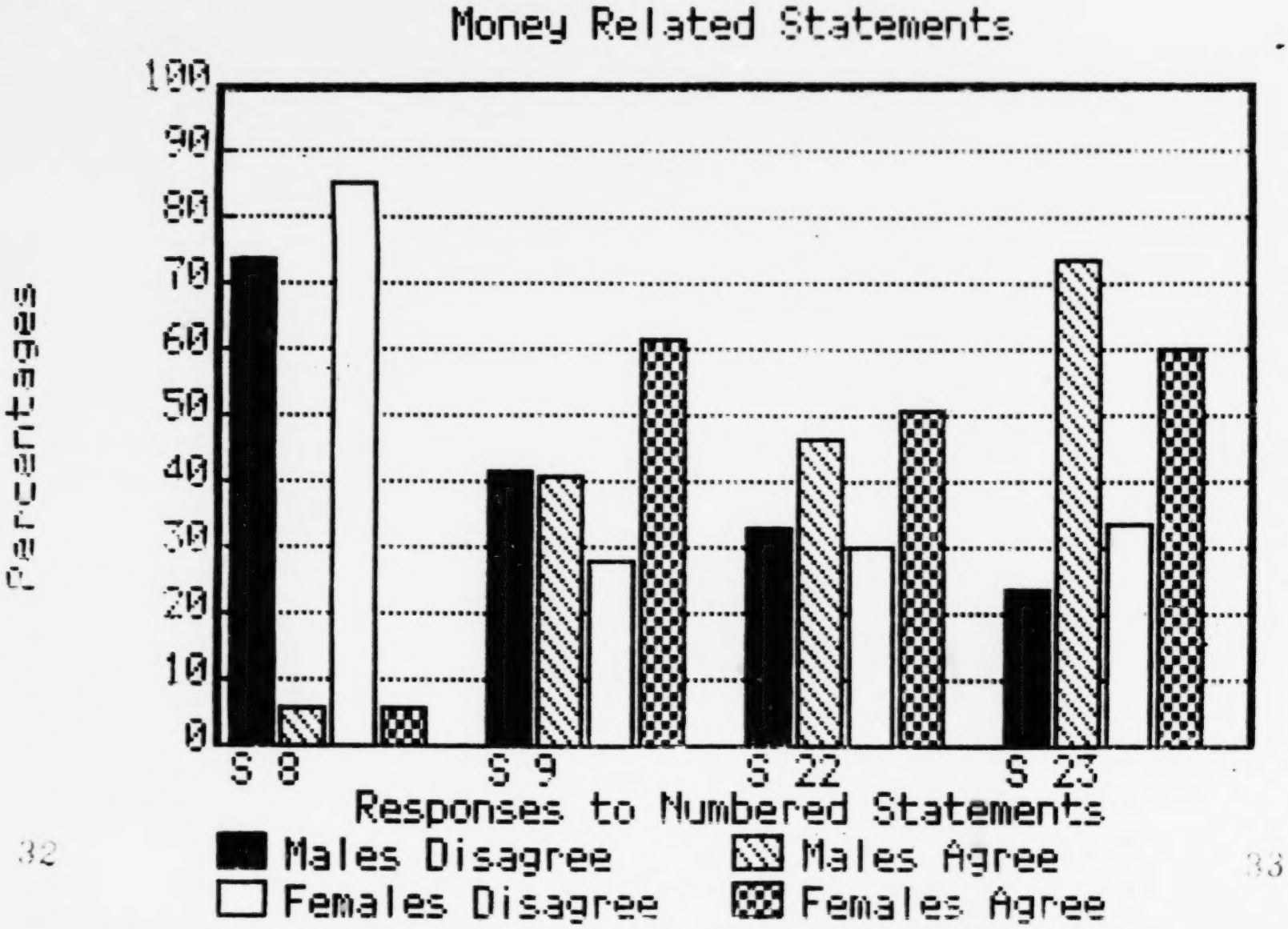
14. ME is for students who do not go on to college.



10. I understood what the ME program was all about before I signed up.
29. I have a good idea of the different subject areas taught in ME.
30. I knew that ME would teach me human relation skills.
36. ME offers me a chance to become more responsible and dependable.



8. I feel ME has little to offer students whose parents are well-off financially.
9. I enrolled so that I could have the chance to earn money at a job secured through the ME program.
22. I need to work to pay for college.
23. My ME job helps to pay for a car.

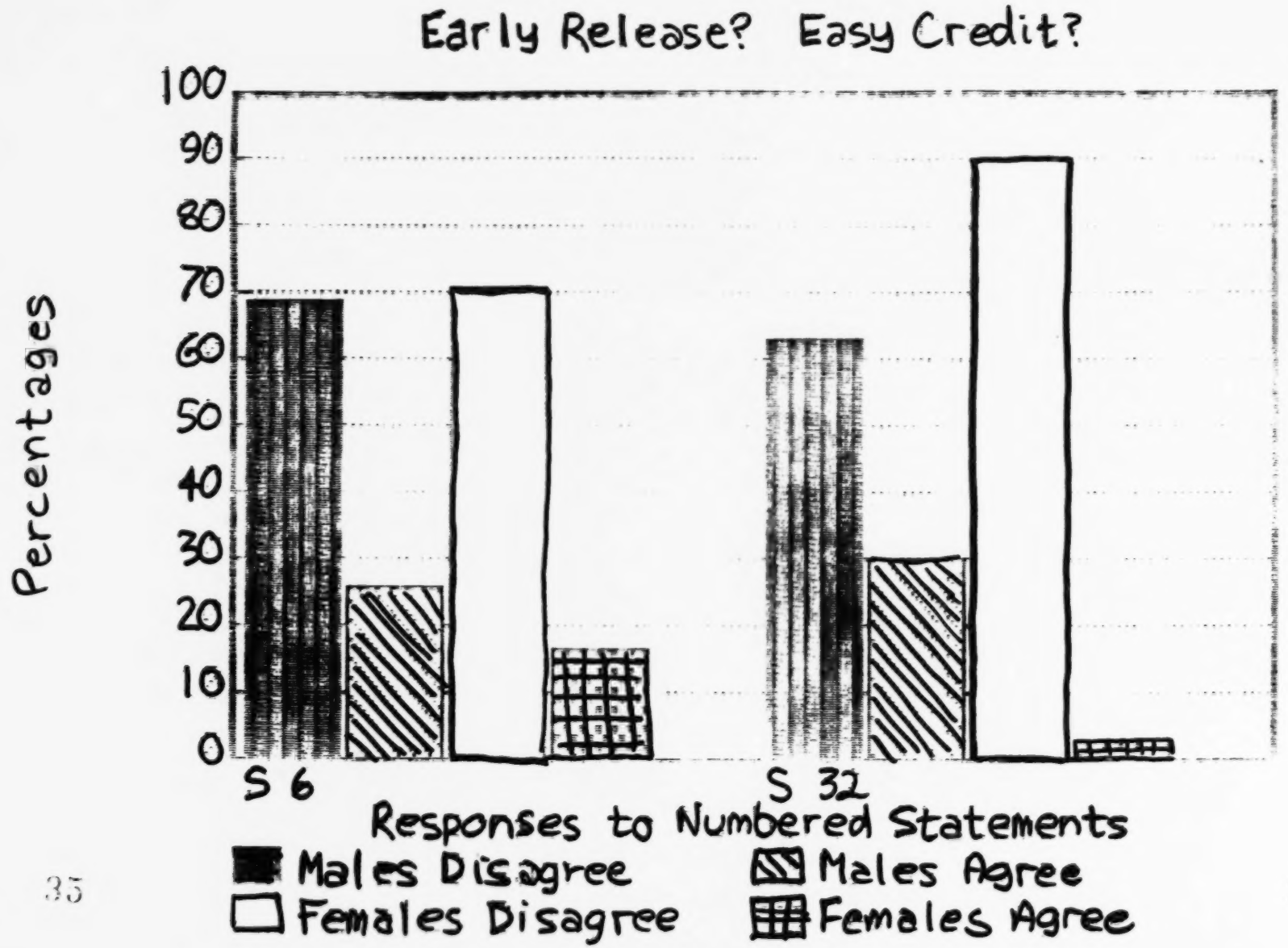


Early Release? Easy Credit?

Statements pertaining to early release and "blow off" classes were asked because of the image many people have about co-op programs. We need to know how many of our students are enrolling simply to be released from school early. The research indicates that 68%-71% of those surveyed did not do so only to be released early. They also indicated that they do not feel the ME is a "blow off" class for those who do not like to come to school. The females disagreed much more in this area (90%) than did the males (62%).

6. I enrolled in ME only to get early release.

32. ME is good only if you don't like to come to school.



Chapter III

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research indicates that students of Marketing Education Cooperative Training Programs do have a positive image of the programs in which they are enrolled. It seems that students overall feel that they are receiving the training, guidance, and curriculum that they expected from the program. The research indeed shows that there is very little difference, if any, among the attitudes of those whose families own their own businesses and those who do not. The study also proves that there is little difference among the attitudes of males and females towards the ME program. It is encouraging to know that students do expect and believe that they will benefit in their careers and the planning of those careers through their involvement in the marketing education program.

Some of the research points to the following conclusions. Program reputations among the schools need to be strengthened. Although the responses were positive, it is felt that action needs to be taken to improve the reputation of ME within our schools. Only half of those polled indicated that they heard of the program through

publicity. Since the ME curriculum includes promotion as a unit of study, more should be done to promote our programs.

Counselors in the high schools need to make more students aware of ME. Students are made aware of their required courses, why not elective subjects as well. Although half of those polled indicated that this was discussed, the other half needs to be addressed.

It is vital to the existence of ME programs that we use every resource available to us to attract the right kinds of students. One of the most valuable resources available to us is our DECA officers and members. The vast majority of our students indicated a that they would recommend ME to their friends as a valuable learning experience. Students will usually listen to the recommendations of friends before those of a teacher. We need to take advantage of this opportunity. The research also showed that too many students are unaware of what the program is all about. It is important that students are aware of the different units covered in class as well as all of the DECA activities offered to them, not to mention the OTJ Training offered.

The respondents strongly indicated that ME is for college bound as well as non-college bound students. We need to attract all types of students.

Recommendations

Although it is recommended that ME coordinators address all of the items addressed in the summary and conclusions section, the following recommendations are made based on the research.

The data implies that more research be conducted to determine exactly what students do know about ME programs before they enroll. This would serve as a promotional tool as well as a means to determine what areas of our programs we need to stress in order to attract more students.

It is recommended that coordinators develop an intensive program for recruitment. This includes working to improve public relations and publicity among all of the faculty, staff and student body.

DECA officers and members should become actively involved in the future existence of their chapter and program. They should visit classmates during homeroom periods, hold assemblies, engage in several DECA week activities and sponsor a career day.

With the ever present attack on vocational education and the necessity for vocational educators to justify programs, it is necessary to provide our community with programs which will benefit not only our students, but the entire community. The first step in achieving that goal is by creating a positive image and attitude among the population thus allowing the program to achieve its intended

purposes.

APPENDIX

Tally Sheet

Question #	1 - Strongly Disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Undecided/Don't know	4 - Agree	5 - Strongly Agree

Table 1

Male Responses to Questionnaire

Table 1

Male Responses (%) to Questionnaire					
	Student's Responses				
Question #	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	01	07	14	46	32
3	03	0	14	50	33
4	34	42	16	03	04
6	33	36	06	14	12
7	05	16	29	35	14
8	36	38	20	02	04
9	13	29	17	32	09
10	14	26	20	30	11
11	10	28	10	37	14
13	15	16	09	36	24
14	48	26	16	07	03
16	40	33	18	05	04
19	13	21	12	36	18
21	04	01	09	58	28
22	13	20	14	30	17
23	07	17	24	37	37
24	03	10	14	42	31
28	05	14	12	37	31
29	07	03	21	49	19
30	09	17	22	36	16
32	36	27	07	12	18
34	02	05	32	34	25
36	02	06	07	55	31
37	03	05	07	58	27
40	02	04	07	50	36

Table 2

Female Responses to Questionnaire

Table 2

Female Responses (%) to Questionnaire					
	Student's Responses				
Question #	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	0	01	20	55	24
3	01	01	65	59	32
4	36	40	14	06	04
6	32	45	06	13	04
7	05	12	26	38	20
8	39	46	09	04	02
9	02	26	10	51	11
10	01	39	15	27	10
11	11	30	06	45	08
13	12	26	06	39	16
14	62	29	04	01	04
16	82	10	02	04	02
19	13	27	06	45	08
21	03	02	12	52	32
22	11	19	20	25	26
23	19	15	06	37	23
24	01	01	12	41	17
28	02	06	17	35	41
29	01	05	23	56	14
30	02	18	25	38	17
32	61	29	07	0	03
34	01	01	28	44	26
36	0	04	06	46	44
37	03	01	07	49	40
40	01	01	08	29	61

Table 3

Responses of Students Whose Family Owns a Business

Table 3

Responses (%) of Students Whose Family Owns a Business					
	Student's Responses				
Question #	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	0	0	15	51	34
3	05	02	05	56	32
4	33	36	24	07	0
6	34	37	07	17	05
7	05	18	23	41	14
8	44	46	07	02	0
9	05	29	12	39	15
10	02	32	27	27	12
11	02	44	12	34	07
13	61	32	05	34	10
14	54	02	10	0	05
16	68	12	12	02	05
19	15	29	12	32	12
21	05	0	12	49	34
22	17	24	17	26	17
23	24	12	07	38	17
24	0	02	19	41	37
28	03	08	15	43	33
29	05	07	20	54	14
30	05	17	17	37	24
32	58	21	13	03	05
34	0	33	25	33	40
36	0	05	07	48	40
37	02	0	10	58	29
40	07	05	10	39	39

Table 4

Responses of Students Whose Family Does Not Own a Business

Table 4

Responses (%) of Students Whose Family Does Not Own a Business					
	Student's Responses				
Question #	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	01	05	21	50	24
3	.8	.8	11	55	33
4	35	42	12	05	06
6	27	50	05	14	05
7	07	14	30	34	15
8	03	42	16	02	06
9	09	26	09	45	11
10	16	31	12	31	09
11	14	24	06	44	11
13	14	20	06	39	22
14	52	25	13	05	05
16	58	24	09	02	06
19	13	23	07	45	12
21	03	02	10	56	29
22	11	16	16	31	26
23	11	18	06	32	33
24	02	06	09	47	36
28	03	10	14	36	37
29	03	03	23	53	17
30	06	18	29	34	13
32	52	34	04	04	05
34	01	04	27	46	21
36	01	04	07	49	38
37	03	03	06	51	36
40	03	02	07	39	50

Responses to Statements By Category

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS BY CATEGORY

		MALES		FEMALES	
Categories	Question #	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
Career Oriented	1	8%	78%	1%	79%
	3	3%	83%	2%	91%
	4	78%	7%	76%	10%
	21	5%	86%	5%	84%
	24	24%	74%	2%	58%
	40	6%	86%	2%	90%
Money	8	74%	6%	85%	6%
	9	42%	41%	28%	62%
	22	33%	47%	30%	51%
	23	24%	74%	34%	60%
Reputation	7	21%	49%	17%	58%
	11	38%	51%	41%	53%
	34	7%	59%	2%	70%
Friends	13	31%	60%	38%	55%
	37	8%	85%	4%	89%
Counselor	19	34%	54%	40%	53%
Early Release Easy Class	6	69%	26%	71%	17%
	32	63%	30%	90%	3%
Awareness of Program goals	10	40%	41%	40%	37%
	29	10%	68%	6%	70%
	30	26%	52%	20%	55%
	36	8%	86%	40%	90%
College	14	74%	10%	91%	5%

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